

We're Not Broken Yet by ForeverDream2012

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Family, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Jonathan B., Joyce B., Will B.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2017-12-29 19:43:31

Updated: 2019-02-19 21:37:20

Packaged: 2019-12-12 20:16:58

Rating: T

Chapters: 5

Words: 7,825

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Jonathan Byers would do anything to keep his mother and brother safe, even if it means dealing with his father's abuse. However, when everything boils over, Joyce forces Lonnie to leave. Now the broken family has to heal and make ends meet. Can they do it? Rated T for physical and mental abuse, mentions of self-hate. Takes place about a year and a half before the Upside Down event

1. As Long As You're Okay

Hey, guys, I know I've been gone for a long time but I randomly wrote this and thought I would share it. I'm working on updating all of my stories, but right now something just feels off. I'm sorry to the readers who are still waiting for me to publish something involving particular fandoms, I'm really trying to get better at this again. Hope you enjoy this one. Will contain a lot of brotherly moments, family bonding, some struggles, and getting over abuse. Takes place about a year and a half before the Upside Down events.

Jonathan's POV

I know what my father does isn't right. I know a father should never want to hurt his kids as much as he does me. But, his income helps keep the house running, and he doesn't beat Will or my mom, so I can't really complain.

Right now, my younger brother is safe at his best friend, Mike's, house. The Wheeler's seem like a boring family, but they're good people, and he's always safe there, so I can't really complain. I'm in my bedroom, working on some homework, when I hear Dad scream in rage. Before I can get up to lock my door, he busts in and shoves me to the ground.

"This is all your fault, you know! You and your brother's!", he bellows at me. I try to get up, but he hits me in the jaw, and I just try to block him, even though that makes it worse. "You two are so damn expensive!", he throws a paper, a bill I'm guessing, on the ground and forces me to my feet. He glares at me, and we hold eye contact for a few moments, and I do my best not to seem afraid of him.

"Let me go, please."

"Don't tell me what to do.", he throws me against the wall, and hits me in the stomach. I lock up, and find myself paralyzed in fear, so I don't fight back. I just try to protect my head as he continues to hit and kick me as hard as he can, until he grows tired of this. I have my head hidden in between my knees, so he doesn't see my tears. I've never seen Dad let me cry. "You and your queer brother are nothing

but useless fags in this house.", everything aches, and he storms out of my room, slamming the door behind him. I don't move for a few minutes, but when I do it feels like my back is broken in two. I hear the front door open, and Mom and Will talk as they enter. I crawl into bed, not wanting either one of them to see me like this. Dad must have been exhausted from what he did to me, because he didn't yell or snap at them from what I hear. A light knock breaks the silence of my room, and a moment later, my mom opens the door, Will right beside her. She has a bag from a fast food joint in her hand, and a small smile.

"Hey, sorry I'm home late.", I never told her. "I brought you a cheeseburger and some fries.", I set up, but use the covers to hide the red marks on my arms, and the possible bruises forming. "Sweetie, are you okay?"

"Yeah, Mom. I'm fine.", she sets the bag on my bedside, and looks me in the eyes. If she knew, she'd leave Dad, force him out of this house and never come back. But again, we need his income. I'll take it, as long as Will's provided for and my mom doesn't have to work herself even more than what she already does. As long as they're not the ones being hurt. "Thank you."

"No problem, sweetheart, I'll go get your drink.", I've become so good at lying to her, she doesn't question it. Will looks at me. He's a little harder to lie to, mostly because I've locked him in my room before to protect him, and he knows me better than anyone else. He doesn't say anything, though, just climbs up on the bed beside me, and I bring out his cheeseburger, then mine. Mom comes in with our drinks. "You guys know you can tell me anything, and I'll never be mad, right?"

"We know, Mom.", I assure her, and she hugs me tightly. She leaves the room, shutting the door behind us, probably to get Dad to bed before he drinks even more.

"I didn't tell her, you know.", I look over at Will, but he's not looking at me. "I know for some reason you don't want her to know, but I think you should tell her."

"I'll tell her when the time is right, buddy.", I pause. "Has he ever?"

"No. You really haven't given him the chance.", he answers, and I nod.

"Then we have nothing to worry about."

"Jonathan."

"Buddy, do you trust me?", he nods. "Do you trust me enough to know I'm going to do what I have to do to protect you and Mom?"

"I guess.", he sighs, and I wrap an arm around him.

"Will, I'm okay.", I assure him. "Friends don't lie, remember that? I promise, I'm okay."

"Promise promise?"

"Promise promise.", he hugs me tightly, and I return it. "How was Mike's? Are you guys working on another campaign?"

"Yeah, he said it's a surprise.", he answers, and I nod. "Have you taken any more photos?"

"No, didn't get the chance to today. I'm thinking about trying to get some by the Quarry, just to get a good landscape shot."

"Can I come?"

"Don't you have the campaign?"

"No, not this weekend. Mike has some family reunion."

"Alright, but stay by me and don't get close to that edge, alright?"

"Alright, thanks, Jonathan.", I couldn't say no to him no matter what anyway, especially when he wants to spend some time with me. He wouldn't get close to the edge of the Quarry anyway, he's a smart kid. His smile tells me that everything's okay, and he hears Dad snapping at Mom in the other room, and Will curls beside me. I know Dad's too worn out to hurt Mom, so I just hold on to Will, and let him cling to me. "Why is he always so mad?"

"Because, that's just how some people are, Will.", I sigh. "Try to eat.", he nods, and takes a bite out of the burger, and I eat mine.

"I'm tired of being told what to do, woman!", Dad snaps at Mom from outside the door.

"Can I stay in here tonight?", Will asks me.

"Yeah, no problem, bud.", he gets nightmares anyway, and it'll be easier than to stay awake at night making sure Dad doesn't go in his room to yell. We stay in my room for another hour or so, and Will begins to dose off. I wrap a cover around him. It's a cold night and the furnace doesn't really work too well. Then I get up to lock the door, so Dad doesn't get any ideas, and head to bed myself. Will falls asleep almost instantly, but I stay up, listening to every noise the house makes.

Alright, so that's chapter one. I'm sorry it may not be the best thing in the world, but I really wanted to write it, so I thought why not share it. Hope you enjoyed this.

2. Don't Touch Him

Jonathan's POV

"Jonathan, are we still going by the Quarry today?", Will asks me from outside. We sit on the swing out front, enjoying the peace of Dad being gone. He actually went to work today.

"We can if you want. I'd like to get those shots anyway.", Mom says we can head out anytime we want as long as we're back by dinner, and we play it safe. I go get my camera, and Will grabs his jacket. We walk towards the Quarry, not that it's too much of a far walk.

"Do you ever get annoyed with me being around you so much?"

"No, you're my best friend.", I answer, and he smiles. "How's school been?", he shrugs. "What's that suppose to mean?"

"People just suck sometimes."

"Is someone messing with you?", he doesn't answer. "Will."

"Just people making comments about me and the others... it sucks."

"Some people you meet in life are just cruel, bud. You can't listen to what negative things people have to say about you, though. You're a great kid, Will, with an amazing future, brighter than anyone's. You can't let them get you down."

"You have to say that."

"Say what?"

"That I'm a good kid and stuff. You're my older brother."

"As your older brother, I have to tell you the truth. And I know you better than anyone else."

"That's fair.", he smiles, and I ruffle his hair. We arrive at the Quarry, and I get the camera out.

"Alright, stay back. This edge is really dangerous.", I don't go all the way out towards it, just enough to get the entire view. Will watches from a safe distance. I take a few shots, then back up myself, and take another shot. I continue this for a couple minutes, before I look over at Will, who's examining the surroundings careful, memorizing every detail. After a moment or so of this, he stops, and just sits down. I have the shots I need.

"How we head back and work on some of your drawings?", he smiles, and nods.

We walk towards the house, and Will has a smile on his face the entire time. I smile to myself, realizing no matter what happened, no matter who tried to bring me down, I always had someone on my side. Someone who thought everything in the world would be okay, even when I didn't, and believed in me to the fullest extent. I could have everyone else in the world hate me, and Will would find one reason to stand up for me, even if there was a thousand reasons to leave. Everything is going to be okay one day, because I have to make things better for him and Mom, they both deserve nothing less.

We arrive back at the house. We sit at the kitchen table, and he draws Will the Wise battling a monster. He's told me the name of it a thousand times, but I just can't remember it no matter how hard I try.

I hear a car door slam and Will and I look at each other, knowingly.

"Go in your room. Lock the door."

"I'm not leaving you to deal with this alone."

"Will, please.", too late. Dad busts the door open, and I grab Will. He comes in the kitchen, barely able to stand, and glares at both of us.

"Well, if it isn't the two fags.", he snaps, bitterly. I roll my eyes. "I got fired today.", he swerves, hitting the counter. I get Will behind me. "We're going to Indianapolis."

"Why?"

"I can get a good job, and they won't be able to find my records from here.", he answers, and gets in my face. His breath reeks with

whiskey, and Will clings to my leg. "Besides, I can have someone keep a better eye on you two."

"Dad, you're drunk. Go to bed.", I tell him, calmly. His face disfigures with anger, and he punches me in the stomach. He punches me in the face, full force, and I hit the ground. Will screams at the top of his lungs, and Dad kicks me in the ribs.

"This is all your fault. You two. Worthless, useless, no good, sons of bitches.", he growls, and kicks me again, and I fall to my side, for a moment unable to move, and a moment is all my dad needs. He goes to do worse, but Will hits him with his backpack.

"Get away from my brother.", Dad spins around, and hits Will as hard as he could, and I hear him cry softly. Everything goes into slow motion, from the hit, to Will hitting the ground, and the tears run down his face, and he holds his cheek in pain. Anger consumes me and I've never felt more hatred for anyone than I felt for Lonnie at that moment. He stopped being my father at that moment.

"You son of a bitch.", I growl, and force myself up, and for the first time ever, hit Lonnie. He stumbles back, surprised. He tackles me, slamming me into the wall, and I fall back. When Will tries to protect me, Lonnie pushes him away and continues to beat the hell out of me. I try to move, but my body is locked up. Will continues to yell, begging Lonnie to leave me alone.

"Lonnie, what the hell!? Get off of him!", I hear Mom scream. "Get off of my boy!", he stops, and Will runs to me, tears pouring down his face, and I feel tears in my eyes, from pain and exhaustion. I choke on a sob. "What the fuck is wrong with you!?"

"Your boy had the nerve to hit me."

"Mom, Jonathan only hit him after he hit me, and I only hit him because he attacked Jonathan.", Will explains, using his jacket to stop the bleeding against my head. He wipes a few tears away and I try to stand.

"Lonnie, you have 5 minutes to get the fuck out of my house and never show up here again.", Lonnie doesn't move. "Get out of my

house!", he gets in her face.

"Your house? How are you going to pay the bills without me?"

"I'll figure it out. Go to fucking hell, you piece of shit father.", she replies, and he raises his fist like he's going to hit her, and I feel adrenaline pump through my veins and I hit Lonnie in the back of the head. Once I get a good punch in, I don't stop. I punch him again, and again. We end up out in the front yard somehow and the fight continues. I grab him by the shoulders, despite the fact my mind is blurry and everything hurts, and shove him against his car.

"Leave, leave and never come back you piece of shit."

"Now you have the nerve to stand up to me?"

"I'm not going to let you hurt them. Ever.", he rolls his eyes at my comment, but gets in his car, and drives away. Mom runs to my side, and I nearly fall.

"Jonathan, sweetheart, we have to get you to the hospital."

"No... no hospital.", I argue, and Will grabs the first aid kit. Mom guides me inside and lays me on the couch, and starts to clean my wounds. "Will, come here.", he does so, and I look at the side of his face, where Lonnie hit him. He has a bruise forming. "That son of a bitch."

"I'm okay, Jonathan.", he assures me, and holds my hand as Mom continues to stop the bleeding from a cut on the side of my face.

"I'm so sorry, baby. I'm never going to let anything touch you again. I swear, nothing is going to hurt you boys ever again.", she has tears pouring down her tired face, but she doesn't wipe them away, because she's trying to handle giving me first aid.

"It's alright, Mom, I should have told you."

"How long has this been going on?", she asks me, desperately. She finishes bandaging the last cut, and Will goes to get me an ice pack. I raise myself up.

"Awhile... I just... knew we needed the income and he wasn't hurting you or Will, so I just dealt with it. I wasn't going to after today either way, though.", I feel two tears fall from my eyes to the floor. "He hit Will during the fight... that's why I hit him.", she grabs a hold of me, and hugs me, protectively and tightly. For the first time ever, I allow myself to feel vulnerable. It's Mom. It's alright. Will comes back with the ice pack and I pull him in, holding Mom with one arm and him with the other. He hugs me back, and we all just stay like this for a moment.

"He's gone. He's never coming back. We'll get by.", Mom tells us, and I nod. I start to cry, without realizing it, and once we release one another, we each have to wipe away our tears. "I promise, nothing is going to get you two again.", Will gets up, and goes into his room. Mom looks at me. "Try to relax, go listen to your music or something. I have to make a few calls so we can make sure he doesn't hurt us anymore.", I nod, and she hugs me again. "Baby, please start talking to me. You're not alone in this world."

"I know, Mom."

"It's my job to protect you, not the other way around.", deep down I know that, but I just can't help it. I nod again, and then she goes towards the phone, and I go into my room to rest for a few minutes. I lay flat on my bed and fall asleep almost immediately. When I wake up, my head is still pounding, but I feel somewhat better, and Mom is still on the phone with someone, looking stressed out. I decide to leave her be, and go check on Will. I don't knock, I open the door, and see Will curled up on his bed, tears pouring down his face, but he's awake. A crumbled piece of paper is beside him.

"Hey, buddy.", I kneel down on his bedside, and he looks at me, and wipes away a few tears.

"Hey, Jonathan.", I pull him into a strong hug, and he curls into me. I use one hand to grab the paper, while holding Will and playing with his hair slightly to calm him down. I examine the drawing. A fort, labeled Castle Byers, written under it, *All friends welcomed*. I immediately get an idea.

"Hey, how about we build this?"

"Really?"

"Yeah, I think we need something to get our minds off everything. This seems like a really good idea.", he lets go of me for a second, to look at me, as if trying to see if I'm for real. He smiles widely, and I go to get the tools. A place where all friends are welcomed, somewhere he can escape. Maybe this is exactly what my little brother needs.

3. Castle Byers

Jonathan's POV

I grab the toolbox from the hallway closet, and Will grabs his paintbrushes. Mom looks at us, still on the phone, and sends me a questioning expression. I show her the crumbled piece of paper.

"We're going to build this.", she examines it, and nods, with a small smile on her face. I look over at Will, and see he's more than ready to go. We walk outside, and head a few feet from the house, and find the perfect spot to start. "I'm going to grab the wood and nails from the shed."

"Jonathan, we don't have to do this if you don't want to. I'm not the best at hammering anyway."

"I want to make this, Will, and don't worry. I'll teach you, okay?", I ask, and he smiles at me. I ruffle his hair and make my way to the shed, and grab the wood, then go back for the nails. Once I'm sure we have everything, I start setting up the structure. My head is still pounding, and my back still aches, but that doesn't matter. "Alright, we need to start hammering the wood together.", I grab my hammer, and he grabs his, and we start. Will misses the nail every time, and I stop for a moment and watch him. "Alright, bud, hold up.", he stops, and looks at me.

"I told you I suck at this."

"And I told you I'll teach you, okay?", I kneel down beside him. "Take your time. Here, watch me.", I hammer in the two pieces of wood together, then grab the other piece, and help him set it up. "You try.", he tries again, this time hitting his finger with the hammer.

"Ow!", he drops the hammer, and I wrap an arm around him.

"You okay?", he nods. "That happens sometimes, don't worry. Take your time.", he tries again, this time going a little slower, but he nails the wood with the other two, and I set it up. "Good job, buddy.", we continue to work for another hour, and I see dark clouds forming.

"We better hurry up, we don't want to get caught in the rain.", we speed up, but 10 minutes after I said that, it starts pouring down rain. I can barely see two feet ahead of me. Will starts coughing, and I put my hammer down, and kneel beside him. "Bud, I think we should finish this tomorrow."

"You can go inside, Jonathan, I'm finishing this."

"Buddy, you're getting sick.", I reply, feeling the rain drip down my hair, to my face, and then the ground. He looks at me, with a fierce determination that tells me everything. He needs this. "Alright, alright. We'll finish this.", I get back up, and a few hours later, we finish Castle Byers. I end up taking off my jacket and putting it around Will, and he's so small it covers most of him. Once we finish the fort, we head in the house. I look at the clock. 12:08 AM. Mom's asleep on the couch, and I look at Will. We're both soaked. "Take a quick hot shower, then get in some warm clothes."

"Okay.", he hands me back my jacket. "Thanks, Jonathan.", he lets out a cough, and I feel his head. Despite the fact we've been out in the pouring, freezing rain, his forehead is burning hot.

"Go get in the shower. Then I'll have some medicine ready for you.", he nods again, and heads towards the bathroom, as I move throughout the house, Mom starts to wake up.

"Were you two out there this whole time?", she asks, getting up. I look at her. She's going to kill me if she knows I got Will sick. I nod. "Jonathan, sweetheart, come here.", I do so, and she feels my head. "You're burning up."

"Will's sick, he's in the shower right now.", I tell her, changing the topic. "Do you know where the medicine is?"

"I'll handle Will, you get into some warm clothes and straight to bed."

"I'm okay, Mom."

"Jonathan, for the love of God, let me take care of you for once.", she tells me. I nod, and go to my room to change into some warm clothes, and when I walk out, Mom has the medicine ready for me.

Will's still in the shower.

"I'm sorry I let us stay out there. We had to finish it, Mom. We just had to.", I try to explain to her the look Will gave me back there, but I couldn't put it into words. "He needs Castle Byers."

"I'm not mad, baby. You're right. This is something you guys had to do.", she tells me, and I just look at her. "Yesterday was rough, for everyone. Especially you and Will."

"Did you get a hold of everyone you needed to?", I ask, and she looks down.

"So far, they may still make Will see him."

"What?"

"You're in the clear, but Lonnie plans on telling the court a different story, and the court may think that Will won't be in danger.", she explains.

"Mom, if Lonnie hurts Will, I'm going to kill him."

"You and me both, baby. I'm working on it. I promise.", I let out a cough, and she hands me the medicine. "Take this.", I do so. She walks in the living room, and then comes back with a cover, and wraps it around me tightly. "I do have a few questions, though, and I need you to answer them, baby.", I nod my head. "How long has this been going on?"

"He always brought me down, but after he made me kill the rabbit, he called me a sissy and I guess that's when he started beating me.", I answer. She nods, with tears in her eyes, and we both take a moment to collect ourselves.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because we needed his income, otherwise you'd be working even more hours. He didn't hit Will, or you, so I didn't think it was a big deal.", I answer. She closes her eyes. "I'm sorry. I should have told you."

"You don't have to apologize to me, Jonathan.", she tells me, and hugs me. I hug her back, but then cough again, and hear the bathroom door open. Will comes out, and Mom gives him some medicine as well. "We'll finish this conversation tomorrow. Both of you need to get some rest.", I nod, and ignore the aching feeling across my body. Will coughs again, and I sigh. I really should have just told him to get inside. Now we're both sick. I walk in my room, and collapse on my bed, and find drifting to sleep much easier than what I thought it would be.

When I wake up the next morning, my head is pounding even worse, and everything hurts. I try to get up, but find myself almost unable. Mom walks in my room, and feels my head.

"You and Will aren't going to school today. You're both too sick."

"Is he alright?", I ask, as she wraps another cover around me.

"He'll be fine, sweetheart. Can you just let me take care of you?", she asks, and I nod. "Good, I'm going to make you boys some soup and then I have to head in to work, but you call me if you need anything at all. I'm going to come by on my break and check on you boys and you better stay in bed."

"Alright, Mom.", I tell her. "Don't worry, we'll be okay.", she nods, but doesn't look all the way convinced.

"Get some rest until I come back in with the soup.", she instructs. Again, I nod, and fall back against the pillow. Mom hugs me one last time before leaving my room.

4. Fighting For Him

Jonathan's POV

"Jonathan?", Will knocks on my door, and I wake up a bit, and hear the door open.

"What is it, buddy?", my head is pounding and my stomach is in knots. I rarely get sick, but when I do it's hell. I set up and look at him, and see he's paler than normal and looks like shit. He doesn't say anything, instead crawls next to me and curls against me. I feel his head, and he's still burning a high fever. But he's shivering.

"Sorry I made you stay out there with me.", he apologizes and I shake my head.

"Don't apologize to me, bud. You don't have to."

"I heard you and Mom talking. I don't want to see him ever again."

"I'm going to do everything in my power to prevent that, Will. No matter what, I'm not going to let him ever lay a hand on you again.", I assure him, and he nods.

"What's so wrong with me?"

"Nothing. It's not you, Will.", I assure him.

"You always say that."

"Because it's the truth.", I reply, and he hugs me tightly.

"Why do you care so much?"

"What?"

"Why do you care about me so much?", he asks, with tears in his eyes.

"How about the fact you're my little brother? Or the fact you're the best kid ever?"

"If I was he wouldn't hate me so much?"

"You can't let him get to you, Will.", I reply, and he coughs again. I wrap a cover around him. "You need to get some sleep. Don't worry about a thing. I got this, okay?", he nods once more, and doses off beside me. He falls asleep within a few minutes. I try to sleep as well, but despite the fact that my body is mentally and physically exhausted, I can't. I just think of Lonnie. Would he go to court to get custody of Will? He would do anything to piss Mom off, but that's too far, even for him. I'm on his shit list now, which could also add on to the situation. He's known I've had a soft side for Will ever since the day he was born.

I close my eyes again, but still can't sleep. My body aches and I feel like I'm about to pass out, but I still can't sleep. I don't know if it's worry about Lonnie, or the sickness itself. All I know is I want it gone.

"Jonathan?", I hear a soft knock and Mom opens the door. She looks at me and Will and smiles slightly. "How did I know I would come home to this?"

"He's asleep.", I tell her, and she nods.

"Well you try to get some sleep, too.", she tells me, softly, and I nod. She closes the door, and I close my eyes again, and manage to fall into an on and off sleep.

"What? He can't go to... Lonnie nearly put Jonathan in the hospital and you expect me to send Will there? What kind of social worker are you?", I hear Mom snap at someone. I open my eyes, my headache gone, but my mind is dazed from sleep. I look at the clock. 3 in the afternoon. Will is still fast asleep beside me, and when I feel his head, he's still burning hot. I carefully get up without waking him, and walk outside of my room, to see Mom arguing on the phone. She looks at me, and I see tears of stress in her eyes as she angrily hangs up the phone.

"They're going to make Will see him again?"

"I... I don't know.", she answers, not hiding it from me. "We'll find out

next week."

"I'm not letting the bastard touch Will, Mom.", I tell her, seriously.

"I know, baby. We'll figure it out.", she assures me, and I cough again. "Go back to bed, you're still sick."

"I'm fine.", I argue, and she rolls her eyes. She sits me on the table, and takes my temperature.

"You still have a fever.", she informs me. "Stress isn't helping the situation."

"I just... I don't want him to get hurt, Mom. I should have told you about Lonnie sooner, I know that. He never laid a hand on you or Will, and I didn't want you to overwork yourself more than what you already did."

"This is not your responsibility to worry about, Jonathan."

"I know, I just can't help it.", I reply, and I feel tears in my eyes.

"Sweetheart, talk to me."

"I don't care if I get hurt or not, I can take a hit, Mom. He crossed the line with Will, and I swear to God I'm not going to let anyone hurt him, especially not Lonnie."

"No one is going to hurt him or you, okay? I'm not going to let it.", Mom and I hug one another, and I force myself not to cry. "Go get some sleep, a social worker will be here later.", I nod, and get up and head back into my room. Will is up, and looks half awake and half asleep.

"Hey, buddy. How are you feeling?"

"Not so good.", he replies, and I sigh.

"Want me to get you some soup?", I offer.

"If it's not too much.", he replies, and I give him a small smile and ruffle his hair.

"I'll be right back with some medicine too.", I tell him, and then walk out back into the kitchen. Mom goes to question me. "I'm getting Will some soup and medicine."

"I got it. You both need rest.", she tells me, and shoos me back into my room. Once I get back in, Will looks at me, worriedly.

"Are you okay?"

"Yeah, Mom just went to get the soup instead."

"No, I mean, are you okay?"

"Yeah, buddy."

"You know I know you better than anyone, right?", he asks. I nod.

"I know, bud."

"So be honest with me.", I look at him, and sigh.

"You know you're my best friend in the world, right?"

"Yeah."

"I just... I hate that Lonnie hurt you. I'm your big brother, and it's my job to make sure things like that doesn't happen to you.", the bruise is still on the side of his face, a reminder of my failure. "You're important to me, kid, and I never want anything to hurt you. Or Mom."

"You protect me all the time, Jonathan. You made sure he didn't hurt me. And when he hit me once, you fought back, even though you were hurt.", he hugs me, and I return it. "You're the best big brother ever.", like I said, a thousand reasons to turn away from me, and Will would find one reason to stick by my side.

"Thanks, Will.", I ruffle his hair., and he smiles.

"If it helps, I'm always on your side.", he informs me, and I smile.

"And I'm always on yours.", I reply, and an hour later, we're both

asleep again. I wake up by the sound of someone knocking on the door. I get up and walk out just as Mom walks in with the social worker. A young woman, with brown, short hair, and wearing a skirt and blouse.

"You must be Jonathan.", she looks over at me, and smiles.

"Yeah, uh, hi.", I keep my distance, as I know I'm sick.

"Where's William?"

"In the bedroom, he's still asleep."

"They're both sick.", Mom explains, and she nods.

"Well, you're the main one I need to talk to if you don't mind. I can get Will another time.", I nod, and we both walk to the living room. Mom did her best to make sure the house looked nice. Everything is clean. "Your mom will be in the other room while we talk."

"Alright.", Mom walks away and we sit down.

"I just have a few questions, if you don't mind.", I nod. "Can you describe your relationship with your father?"

"Toxic. Very abusive."

"When did that abuse start?"

"Well, he always made comments about me, but it got physical after he took me hunting, and made me kill a rabbit. I cried for a week, and he hit me off of the couch and I busted my forehead. I guess it relieved stress off of him, and he just kept hitting me and it got worse over time."

"And yesterday afternoon... what happened there?"

"I just got back from a walk with Will, and he came in the house, and I got Will behind me and he shoved me against the wall and started hitting and kicking me. Will hit him with his backpack, and he turned around and... he hit Will in the face.", I pause for a moment. I don't care about what happened to me, it doesn't hurt too bad anymore,

but it still hurts to think about what he did to Will. "He fell, and I got so mad..."

"It's alright, Jonathan.", she assures me, as I stop again.

"I hit him, but I couldn't keep up a fight, and he ended up getting me pretty bad.", I point to my face, with the bruises and cut. "Mom came home, and got him off of me. They argued, he went to hit her, I hit him and didn't stop until he left."

"You didn't do anything wrong, Jonathan.", she tells me.

"Don't let Will go with him. Please. I'll go if he wants a fight but not him."

"Do you feel that Will is in danger with him?"

"Yes."

"Why? From our knowledge, Will only got hit when he hit your father."

"As my father was beating me.", I stop. "My mom and I are on his bad side, and anyone who knows us knows that Will is the single most important person to both of us."

"So you believe that your father would hurt Will because he can't hurt you?"

"Yes."

"I'm going to do whatever I can to make sure that Will doesn't get placed in his custody, but right now the court is going to see that he hasn't hurt Will, and some people will argue that he was disciplining Will."

"There's a bruise on the side of his face. That's not disciplining, that's endangering him."

"I know that, Jonathan, but we have to convince the courts."

"Just tell me what you need me to do. It'll be done."

"I got what I need now, you go back and get some rest. The sooner you're no longer sick, the better.", I nod. "Thank you, Jonathan. I'm on your side."

"Thank you.", I nod at her, and then head to my room as Mom walks out. She gives me a comforting look, and I return it as I step into my room. Will is still peacefully sleeping, and I remind myself that I'm fighting this for him. No one else. Him.

5. The Decision

A/N- Hey, guys, so I'm trying to update more. I'm sorry I stopped writing a lot, college is crazy, and I feel like there's always something going on. I promise I'll try to update once a week at least one story, or every other week, but we'll see how it goes. Here's the next chapter of We're Not Broken Yet.

Jonathan's POV

A week passes, and Will and I are no longer sick. Things around the house are still tense, and he's been in Castle Byers most of the time. I've been helping Mom around the house and checking up on Will to make sure he's okay.

"Hey, bud." I open the blanket that Will made the door from. He has an old mattress on the ground, with some pillows and blankets and a few of his toys are on the floor. He smiles at me, slightly. "You okay?"

"Yeah, I wouldn't I be?"

"You know I know you better than anyone else." I tell him, and he nods.

"I'm scared."

"Why?"

"I don't want to go with him, Jonathan." he answers, and I nod. "What if he doesn't bring me back?"

"I'll go get you." I reply, and he just looks at me. "Will, no one is ever taking you from me, okay? Even if Lonnie didn't bring you back, I would personally go up there and get you. I would search every inch of the earth if I had to. Trust me, buddy, I'm not going to let anything ever take you from me and Mom." he smiles and hugs me. I return it. "Now, no more thinking of Lonnie. He's out of our lives, and that's for what's best, okay? You focus on being a kid." he nods again.

"Thanks, Jonathan."

"No problem now let's go. Let's get something to eat." he climbs out of the fort and we head back inside. I pour him a glass of milk and hand him a sandwich, and he sits down at the living room table. Mom's at work, so it's just us for the day. The phone rings, and while Will eats, I answer it.

"Byers."

"Let me talk to your mother, boy." Lonnie's voice snaps on the other line, and I roll my eyes.

"If you have something to say to her, you can say it with her lawyer present." I reply.

"Don't think because I'm not there you can talk to me that way."

"I'm just saying if you want to talk to her, wait until her lawyer is present. Anything else?", he growls and hangs up the phone. Will doesn't say anything, and I walk over and ruffle his hair. "How about after this we pick out a movie?" he smiles and nods. He finishes his sandwich, and then we walk into the living room. He sits down and looks through the movie options.

I have to be strong. I don't care what has to be done. Will isn't going to suffer anymore, and Lonnie won't get away with hitting him. I can't believe I allowed it. I should have just said something from the beginning then Lonnie would never have had the chance to hurt him. He still has a slight bruise on his cheek from where Lonnie slapped him, and every time I see it my stomach drops.

"Jonathan?"

"Yeah?"

"I know you're blaming yourself, but it really wasn't your fault. He chose to leave, just like he chose to hurt us. You didn't hurt me or Mom." I sit beside him as he looks through the movies, and I wrap him into a hug with one arm. The idea of someone hurting Will is enough to make me go insane. I know Mom loves me, but I feel like Will is the only thing I have most of the time.

"I know, buddy." I assure him, and then we look through the movies

together, ultimately deciding on Raiders of the Lost Ark.

"I'm glad he's out of the house." Will tells me, as we settle in the couch. I look over at him. "I know it upsets you that I got hurt, but Jonathan, it really hurt to see what he did to you. I've been wanting to tell Mom." he shakes his head slightly as we wait for the movie. "I really wish you cared more about your own wellbeing."

"I do care about my wellbeing, Will."

"No, you don't. You can lie to everyone else, but we both know you don't. You care about mine and Mom's, and I get that, but Jonathan, I wish you cared more about yourself. Because I care about you, and so does Mom, and I know you don't want to see me get hurt, but seeing Dad hurt you like that... there's nothing worse to me."

"I'm sorry, bud." I apologize. "I really am. I didn't think about how much it would affect you to see me like that. But I'm okay. I promise. I really am."

"Just promise me you'll start caring more about yourself, please, Jonathan?" like I said before, I can't say no to this kid.

"Alright, bud." I promise, and then the movie finally starts. We spend the next two hours watching the movie, though I'm not a fan of Indiana Jones and the movie is the last thing on my mind. I didn't think about how what Lonnie did to me would hurt Will, too. I knew he wouldn't be happy about it, but I didn't think too far into that. I snapped and feel like my chest is being clawed out every time I glance over at the bruise on his cheek. I can't imagine how much it would hurt him to see the injuries on me. Will knew about the abuse about a month into it, and that's because Lonnie went for him before and I stepped in and took the beating so he wouldn't have to.

I look over at Will, whose eyes are focused solely on the movie, because he loves Indiana Jones and everything about it. Will's always been close to me and Mom. With Mom working, it's mostly just us. He's always hung around my side, showing me his drawings, taking an interest in my photography, and just making up excuses to be around me. He comes to me if he has nightmares, or he just wants to talk. He goes on and on about the campaigns Mike creates for their

game and tells me all about it. Will is truth be told my best friend, and I know he would stick by my side through anything. I should have taken the time to realize my wellbeing can affect his, just like his plays a huge role in mine.

By the end of the movie, Will is dosing off on the other side of the couch. I smirk and put a blanket over the kid, before cleaning up the kitchen so Mom doesn't have to worry about it. Once I'm done, I straighten up the house in general before heading back to the couch and seeing Will still peacefully asleep. I smile at the sight before picking him up and carrying him to his room. The house remains still. When Lonnie left, he took most of the tension with him. It's one of those days in Indiana where it's spring, but it feels like a summer day, and the open windows bring sunlight in the small home. My heart rate slows to a relaxing beat and I sit down on the couch and enjoy the warmth and moments of peace.

"Jonathan? Sweetheart, wake up." I wake up to Mom gently shaking my shoulder until I wake up. I look over at her, and notice the way she slightly frowns with distress, and my mind becomes alert about everything around me, but nothing appears to be out of place.

"Mom, what's wrong?"

"I have good news and bad news."

"Bad news first."

"Will still has to see Lonnie two days out of the month."

"Good news?"

"It has to be in a public place, with either a social worker present or myself, but it can't be you."

"He doesn't want to see me?"

"He told the court that you two don't see eye to eye." yeah, that's because we don't. "I think he's just taking those visits with Will out of spite."

"But it's in a public area and Will doesn't have to be alone with him?"

she nods. "And it's only two days out of the month?"

"Yes."

"That's not terrible, it could have been a lot worse."

"I know." she replies, with a small sigh. "Thank you for being so strong and helpful during all of this, sweetheart, you have no idea how much easier it makes things."

"No problem, Mom, I'm still sorry I didn't tell you sooner."

"It's alright. No more secrets, though, okay?"

"Alright, Mom, no more secrets."

A/N- So my plan for the next few chapters is basically to show Will trying to build a relationship with his father more because he feels obligated to do so, and it may be told from Will's POV rather than Jonathan's. I want to kind of compare how each brother would think on the situation, and how they're both concern about the other and their mother. Prewarning for the next chapter, there is going to show Lonnie very manipulative towards Will and there's going to be mentions of Will's low self-esteem and struggling with himself. Until next time!